THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
STEVE HICKS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Unique/Course number: 61620/SW 313	**Instructors:** Xiao Ding, MSSA, LMSW
Semester: Fall 2023	**Office Phone:** (216) 502-9410
Meeting Time: Mon/Wed 11:00am-12:30pm	**Office Hours:** F 9-10am virtual or by appt
Meeting Place: SSW 1.214	**Email:** xiaoding@utexas.edu

SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH METHODS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to help you gain an understanding of and appreciation for the use of research as a tool for evidence-based and culturally-grounded social work practice. You will be introduced to the concepts and skills underlying a systematic approach to social work research, including: basic research terminology; the scientific method in social work; the value of research in social work; research ethics and the social work value base; problem formulation and conceptualization; measurement; research designs to evaluate programs and practice; sampling; alternative quantitative and qualitative data gathering; analytic techniques; and preparation and use of research reports. You will also learn how research tools can be misused in ways that support structural inequities and misrepresent issues for people with marginalized identities, including racialized identities, ethnic origin, class, gender, gender identity and expression, culture, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical and mental disabilities, caste, immigration/refugee status, national origin of communities and tribal sovereign status.

The emphasis in the course is on equipping you with the research knowledge and skills you will need to engage in the evidence-based and culturally-grounded practice process in generalist social work practice. You will learn to critically analyze research findings and be an effective consumer of social work research. You will also learn how social work practice influences the research process and the identification of research problems and questions.

Prerequisite: Course credit or concurrent registration for SW 318, Social Work Statistics, or any approved SW 318 substitution.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES
Upon completion of this course you should be able to:

1. Define the process and steps of social work research.
2. Understand the importance of research activities in social work practice and the importance of the partnership between social work researchers and practitioners.
3. Understand how the concepts and lenses of various practice theories including, but not limited to, ecological systems theory, strengths-based perspective, critical race theory, anti-racism, and anti-oppressive theories with a focus on theories that center racialization using perspectives developed by Black, Indigenous and other scholars of color, can be applied to social work research.

4. Describe how particular values and sensitivity to ethical issues influence social work research.
5. Using a social justice lens, identify policies, behaviors, and beliefs that perpetuate racist and oppressive ideas and actions in research.
6. Demonstrate the following social work research skills:
    a. Completion of a literature review;
    b. Formulation of research problems;
    c. Formulation of research questions and hypotheses;
    d. Identification of gaps in knowledge;
    e. Planned use of various research methods (e.g., survey research, single subject design, experimental and quasi-experimental designs, field research, and use of secondary data);
    f. Planned collection and analysis of research data; and
    g. Planned use of interpretation of research results.
7. Understand and compare quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research designs.
8. Critically analyze evidenced-based research and apply research findings to social work practice.
9. Critically appraise how social work commitment to equity and social, economic, and racial justice influences and differentiates the social work research process.
10. Explain ethical issues in conducting and using research, as well as the role of the social work values in research and evaluation.
11. Explain the ways in which inequities and assumptions (e.g., racialization, ethnic origin, class, gender, gender identity and expression, culture, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical and mental disabilities, caste, immigration/refugee status, national origin of communities and tribal sovereign status) influence research and the appraisal and use of research to guide practice and policy decisions.
12. Evaluate the ways in which social work practice and interventions influence decision making and trends in research.

EPAS Competencies
The Steve Hicks School of Social Work has been continuously accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 1952. In order to maintain our accreditation status, the UT SHSSW engages in ongoing curriculum assessment to demonstrate compliance with CSWE's Education Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS).

Using a common evaluation instrument, this course measures the implementation of knowledge, skills, values, and/or cognitive and affective processes to assess the following competencies:
    Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
    Outcome 4.1: Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research
    Outcome 4.2: Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings

Outcome 4.3: Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery

III. TEACHING METHODS

This class will be held in person twice a week. Students will be expected to read and review course content prior to their in-person class session. Course content will include text readings, supplemental readings, pre-recorded lectures, podcasts, and/or videos. In-class activities will include group discussions, group activities, and dedicated time to students working through the research proposal assignment.

IV. REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS

a. *Books*

Rubin, A. & Babbie, E.R. (2017). *Research Methods for Social Work* (9th ed.). Cengage.

b. *Additional materials*

Additional materials listed in the course schedule and bibliography are available on UT Canvas. Several multimedia resources have been selected to complement the textbook including podcasts, TedTalks and brief video presentations.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignment	Possible points
NIH Human Subjects Certificate (15% of grade) Online training: https://utdirect.utexas.edu/citi/citi_login.WBX Course to be completed: Social/Behavioral Researchers - Basic Course, Required and Elective Modules. Students may submit an electronic copy (PDF or screen shot of the completion) of their course completion certificate on Canvas.	15
Quizzes (5 quizzes at 6 points each; 30% of grade) Quizzes are used to provide the professor a sense of student comprehension of material. Students will complete 5 online quizzes by Sunday at 11:59pm each week. There are 6 quizzes available and the lowest score (or one missed quiz) can be dropped. Quizzes are open book and consist of ten questions each. Students may retake the quiz as many times as needed to achieve their desired grade before the due date on Sunday at 11:59pm.	30
Research Proposal (55% of grade) Submit a 10-15 page paper (excluding title page, references, and appendices) of your Research Proposal. The research Proposal is designed to help you deepen your understanding of the key research concepts covered in the course through practice and application. A more detailed description of this assignment is provided on Canvas. • Formulate an answerable research question that will contribute to an evidence based social work practice;	

- Literature review (in peer-reviewed journals) of the chosen problem and critical appraisal of the efficacy and effectiveness of the evidence-based practice/service/intervention;
- Research design (quasi-experimental or experimental design; description of the procedures of implementing evidence-based practice/service/intervention; sample inclusion/exclusion criteria, planned methods of subject identification, screening, recruitment, and retention; fidelity monitoring method;
- Design and methods of data collection;
- Anticipated findings and their implication for social work practice, programs, and/or policies;
- Anticipated limitations of the study with resect to its research; and
- Identify gaps in the literature and suggest areas for additional research.

Research Proposal Presentation:
Give a five-minute presentation (5-10 slides) of the highlights and key findings (as listed above) of the Research Proposal.

Part 1 completion points	5
Draft completion points	5
Final draft	35
Presentation	10
	100

VI. Grades

Grades are assigned based on the standard rubric listed below.

94.0 and Above	A
90.0 to 93.999	A-
87.0 to 89.999	B+
84.0 to 86.999	B
80.0 to 83.999	B-
77.0 to 79.999	C+
74.0 to 76.999	C
70.0 to 73.999	C-
67.0 to 69.999	D+
64.0 to 66.999	D
60.0 to 63.999	D-
Below 60.0	F

VII. CLASS POLICIES

1. *Class Attendance*. Any class material missed due to a class absence is the students' sole responsibility. For any emergencies or disabilities that a student might not be able to attend the class in person, please contact the instructor ahead of time to arrange accommodations.

2. *Class participation*. Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class, and should be well prepared to participate in discussions and experiential learning assignments. Failure to demonstrate through discussions that one has completed the readings will be considered in assigning the class participation grade.

3. *General assignment requirements.* Students should follow specific instructions for each assignment. In general, references/sources used in papers must be in APA 7th edition format and be academic/scholarly sources. If questions about the credibility of a reference arise, consult with the instructor.   The instructor is also available by email to answer questions about assignments. Students should submit questions or requests for clarifications at least 24 hours before an assignment is due. If an assignment is due in less than 24 hours, the instructor cannot guarantee a timely response.

4. *Assignment due dates*. Students will be penalized for late assignments by subtracting 5% of the potential points for the assignment for each calendar day that an assignment is late. UT does not allow Incompletes (grade of X) to provide additional time to complete assignment. Students will be informed of any changes in assignments, due dates, and other class content. If an assignment is due on a date the student cannot attend class or during a time when a student is having difficulties printing a paper, papers may be emailed to the professor by the start of that day's class.

5. *Use of technology in class*. Students are encouraged to bring laptops to use in class. However, computers should only be used for taking notes or relevant in class activities. Any inappropriate use of computers for emailing or internet usage is not permitted. Professional conduct includes respectful and meaningful efforts to participate in group projects. Use of laptops, phones and similar electronic devices in class is prohibited except for use during approved times.

VIII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES
COVID-19 RELATED INFORMATION. The University's policies and practices related to the pandemic may be accessed at: https://protect.utexas.edu/

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HONOR CODE. The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

ACCESSIBLE/COMPLIANT STATEMENT: If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Disability and Access (D&A). You may refer to D&A's website for contact and more information: http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/. If you are already registered with D&A, please touch base with your instructor to discuss your Accommodation Letter as early as possible in the semester so your approved accommodations can be implemented.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM. The professor expects students to act as professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as race, ethnicity, gender, sex, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, and sexual orientations, among others. We expect to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. This atmosphere includes working intentionally to recognize and dismantle racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism in the classroom. Social Work also deals with complex and controversial issues. These issues may be challenging and uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this environment, we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. Nevertheless, the professor requires that students engage one another with civility, respect, and professionalism.

UNANTICIPATED DISTRESS. Students may experience unexpected and/or distressing reactions to course readings, videos, conversations, and assignments. If so, students are encouraged to inform the professor. The professor can be responsive and supportive regarding students' participation in course assignments and activities, but students are responsible for communicating clearly what kind of support is desired. If counseling is needed, students may contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471-3515 or online at https://cmhc.utexas.edu/.

POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION. Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums, please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Social work students who use social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and other forms of electronic communication (e.g. blogs) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image.

Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in any form of electronic media, including *any* information that might lead to the identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in *any* way.

Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by the School of Social Work, the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Social work students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and / or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct.

USE OF COURSE MATERIALS. The materials used in this course, including, but not limited to exams, quizzes, and homework assignments, are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized duplication of the course materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of course materials without the specific, express approval of the professor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This sharing includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of distributing those materials to other current or future students.

CLASSROOM CONFIDENTIALITY. Information shared in class about agencies, clients, and personal matters is considered confidential per the NASW Code of Ethics on educational supervision and is protected by regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well. As such, sharing this information with individuals outside of the educational context is not permitted. Violations of confidentiality could result in actions taken according to the policies and procedure for review of academic performance located in sections 3.0, 3.1, and 3.2 of the Standards for Social Work Education.

UNIVERSITY ELECTRONIC MAIL STUDENT NOTIFICATION. Electronic mail (email), like postal mail, is a mechanism for official University communication to students. The University will exercise the right to send email communications to all students, and the University will expect that email communications will be received and read in a timely manner.Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at https://it.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy.

RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS. A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable period after the absence. A reasonable accommodation does

not include substantial modification to academic standards, or adjustments of requirements essential to any program of instruction. Students and instructors who have questions or concerns about academic accommodations for religious observance or religious beliefs may contact the Office for Inclusion and Equity. The University does not maintain a list of religious holy days.

TITLE IX DISCLOSURE. Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas Education Code, Section 51.252 (formerly known as Senate Bill 212) requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, to report to the Title IX Office any information regarding incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive information about incidents of this type (including, but not limited to, written forms, applications, one-on-one conversations, class assignments, class discussions, or third-party reports) must report it to the Title IX Coordinator. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX-related incident, please remember that I will be required to report this information.

Faculty, staff, graduate assistants, teaching assistants, and graduate research assistants are mandatory reporters under federal Title IX regulations and are required to report a wide range of behaviors we refer to as sexual misconduct, including the types of misconduct covered under Texas Education Code, Section 51.252. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex – including pregnancy and parental status – in educational programs and activities. The Title IX Office has developed supportive ways and compiled campus resources to support all impacted by a Title IX matter.

If you would like to speak with a case manager, who can provide support, resources, or academic accommodations, in the Title IX Office, please email: supportandresources@austin.utexas.edu. Case managers can also provide support, resources, and accommodations for pregnant, nursing, and parenting students.

For more information about reporting options and resources, please visit: https://titleix.utexas.edu, contact the Title IX Office via email at: titleix@austin.utexas.edu, or call 512-471-0419.

CAMPUS CARRY POLICY. The University's policy on campus carry may be found here: https://campuscarry.utexas.edu.

SAFETY. As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

BEHAVIOR CONCERNS and COVID-19 ADVICE LINE (BCCAL). If students have concerns about

their behavioral health, or if they are concerned about the behavioral health of someone else, students may use the Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns. This service is provided through a partnership between the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit https://safety.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line. The Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line has been expanded to support The University of Texas at Austin community during the COVID-19 pandemic. By calling 512-232-5050 - Option 2 for COVID-19, students, faculty and staff can be assisted in English and Spanish with COVID-19 support.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY. Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:
· Familiarize yourself with all exit doors in the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
· If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
· In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
· Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic	Learning Objectives	Before Class	Due
1(M)	Aug 21		Syllabus		
1(W)	Aug 23	Research in SW EBP	• Explain how research is part of social work practice • Describe the process of using evidence-based practice in social work	Read • Ch. 1, Ch. 2 • (Faulkner & Parrish, 2018) Listen/watch • Podcast: (Singer, 2011)	
2	Aug 28 Aug 30	Research Process	• Differentiate the purposes of qualitative and quantitative methods. • Describe the role of theory in social work research. • Formulate research questions using theory and existing research • Assess and organize existing research to format a literature review	Read • Ch.3, 4, 7 Listen/watch • Podcast: (Linder, 2016a)	Quiz 1

3(M)	Sept 4	LABOR DAY HOLIDAY NO CLASS			
3(W)	Sept 6	Ethics	• Articulate the importance of protecting human subjects	<u>Read</u> • Ch. 5 • (Spettel & White, 2011) • (Brandon et al., 2005) <u>Listen/watch</u> • Podcast: (Linder, 2019b)	NIH Training Certificate (CITI)
4	Sept 11	Cultural considerations of research	• Apply Critical Race Theory to research processes and products	<u>Read</u> Ch. 6 Daftary (2020) Cimpian (2017)	Quiz 2
	Sept 13				
5	Sept 18	Measurement	• Operationalize constructs • Identify validated measurements	<u>Read</u> • Ch. 8,9,10 <u>Listen/watch</u> • Podcast: (Singer, 2008)	
	Sept 20				
6	Sept 25	Research design: experimental & quasi-experimental designs	• Differentiate between experimental and quasi-experimental designs • Appraise research designs in terms of their threats to validity	<u>Read</u> • Ch. 11, 12 <u>Listen</u> Podcast: (Singer, 2013)	Quiz 3
	Sept 27				Complete Research question checklist items for class discussion
7	Oct 2	Research design:	• Formulate plan for single subject design in practice	<u>Read</u> • Ch. 13, 14	Paper- Part 1 due

	Oct 4	single case & program evaluation	• Understand the importance of evaluating programs	Listen/watch • Guest lecture • Podcast: (Bakk, 2020) • Podcast:(Syms, 2019)	
8	Oct 9 Oct 11	Data collection: sampling & surveys	• Construct a sampling plan • Develop a survey	Read • Ch.15, 16 Listen • Podcast: (Linder, 2016b)	Quiz 4
9	Oct 16 Oct 18	Data collection: existing documents	• Identify four methods of using existing data to answer research questions	Read • Ch. 17 Listen • Podcast: (Linder, 2019a) • Video: (Edin, 2016) Video: (Edin, 2015)	
10(M)	Oct 23	Writing Research Proposals	• Articulate elements in a scientific research proposal • Outline and design the core elements	Read • Ch. 23	Quiz 5
10(W)	Oct 25	No in-person class. Sign up for virtual consultations on Paper draft		N/A	
11(M)	Oct 30	No in-person class. Sign up for virtual consultations on Paper draft		N/A	Paper (bulleted) draft due by midnight
11(W)	Nov 1	Qualitative research	• Articulate plan for qualitative study • Understand qualitative data analysis	Read • Ch. 18, 19, 20 • (Brown, n.d.)	

				Listen/watch • TedTalk:(Brown, 2010)	
12	Nov 6	Quantitative analysis	• Interpret research findings • Translate research findings for practice and policy	Read • Ch. 21, 22 • (Teater, 2017)	Quiz 6
	Nov 8			Listen/watch • TedTalk: (Goldacre, 2011)	
13(M)	Nov 13	Guest Speaker	• Drafting and presenting Research Proposals		
13(W)	Nov 15	No in-person class. Sign up for virtual consultations on final paper/presentations			
14	Nov 20	FALL BREAK/THANKSGIVING -NO CLASS			
	Nov 22				
15(M)	Nov 27	Presenting research proposals			
15(W)	Nov 29	Presenting research proposals			
16(M)	Dec 4	Last Day of Class • Class evaluations			Final Research Proposal due Presentation due

X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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